

When We Fail to Tremble at His Word

by Jeremy James



When Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, came to visit him in the desert and saw how much of a burden he was carrying, he strongly advised that the prophet delegate some of it to others:

**“...thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God,
men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them...”
(Exodus 18:21)**

The first attribute he cited was a fear of God. Only those who fear Him can serve Him. The presence of this vital spiritual attribute is not always easy to detect, but its absence is immediately evident in those who neglect His Word or treat it with less than complete and unconditional respect.

A genuine servant loves truth and hates covetousness, **“which is idolatry” (Colossians 3:5)**. It would never occur to him to allegorize God’s Word, to omit or ignore parts of it, or allow its intended meaning to be clouded by symbolism. As best he can, he weighs every verse and seeks to understand its sense.

Over the past century we have seen a great increase in the number of professing Christians who believe they are entitled to interpret God’s Word in accordance with their own opinions. Until recently the majority of Christians saw this for what it was, namely a serious departure from the discipline required to rightly divide the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

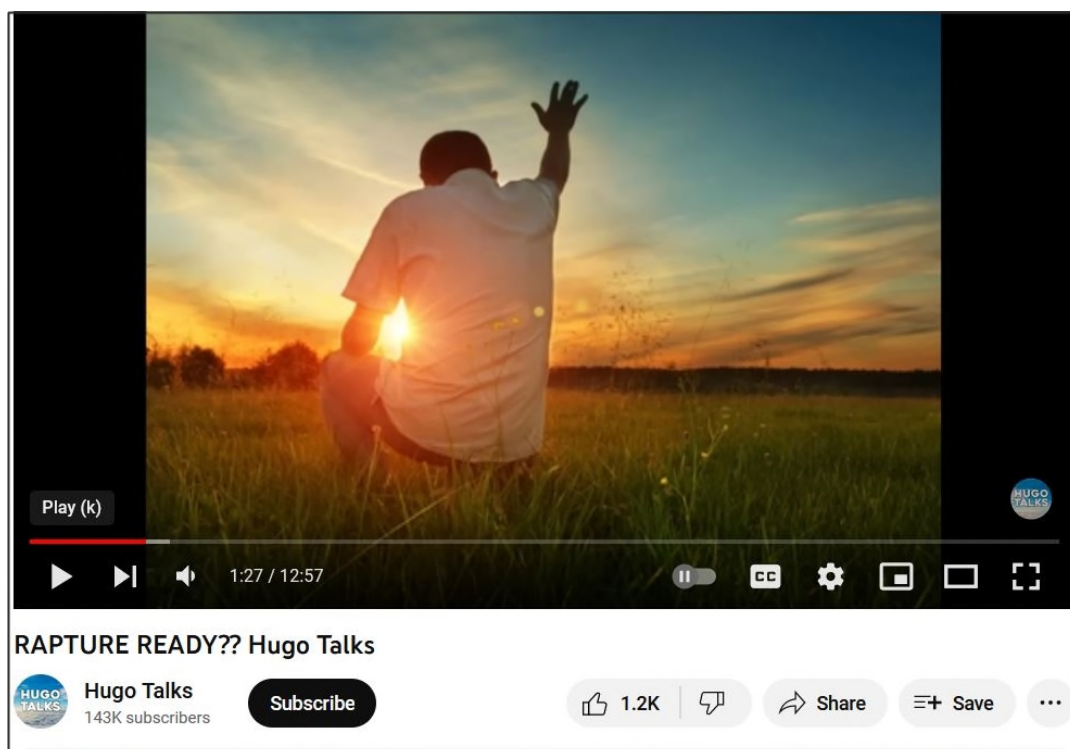
The Bible expressly warns against any “private interpretation” of Scripture (2 Peter 1:20). However, over the past twenty years or so, the number of Christians who are prepared to challenge this practise has fallen dramatically. I came across a stark example of this recently. A friend sent me a link to a UK website called ‘Hugo Talks’ [HT], which seems to be exposing many of the schemes and deceptions that are being used by the masters of the planned *New World Order*. Whether the site is genuine or simply a vehicle to control the narrative is something the reader will need to consider. The video in question, which was posted on 9 July, was devoted to a discussion of the Rapture, in particular whether belief in a Pre-Tribulation Rapture [PTR] was justified on scriptural grounds.

When an opinion overrides a doctrine

One would expect such a discussion to look at all the passages of Scripture relating to the Rapture and use sound expository principles to reveal what the Holy Spirit is telling us. But, as we will demonstrate below, this was far from being case. He took a selective, if not dismissive, approach to Scripture, all the while promoting his “opinion” and urging his listeners to dismiss the PTR as a false teaching.

While he has his own website (*hugotalks.com*) he also posts his videos on YouTube, where they attract regular comments from his viewers. At the time I looked through the response to his Rapture video (Part One) there were 360 messages in the Comment Box, of which 125 expressed agreement with HT and 94 disagreed (It was difficult to tell where the others stood).

Very few took him to task for his shamefully biased presentation or his selective use of Scripture to support what he freely admitted was simply his own opinion.



Over the past year or so HT has given his viewers the impression that he is now a Christian and has left his agnostic past behind him. But is that so? As one person noted in his comment, “I haven't even heard a clear testimony of whether he is saved.” Several referred to his poor understanding of Scripture, while one viewer called him “the finest of all Freemasons.” Another drew attention to the image at 1.27 (which was on screen for 14 seconds). It shows a man bending a knee and bowing to the sun while making a well-known Masonic hand-sign – see image [above](#).

Mr Friendly

In many of his other videos HT adopts the tone and persona of a friendly ‘man-in-the-street’ who wants to be fair to everyone, who only quotes what he knows, and who seeks to avoid all appearance of dogmatism or personal bias. In this video, however, there is not the slightest doubt where he stands or that he harbors a measure of contempt for those who, in his opinion, are foolish enough to believe in a PTR.

Papers on our website dealing with the Pre-Tribulation Rapture

Understanding the Rapture from a Strictly Biblical Perspective

by Jeremy James



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The Morning Star: Christ Came Twice at His First Coming and will Come Twice at His Second

by Jeremy James



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***Be Not Soon Shaken in Mind:* Clear Scriptural Proof of a Pre-tribulation Rapture**

by Jeremy James



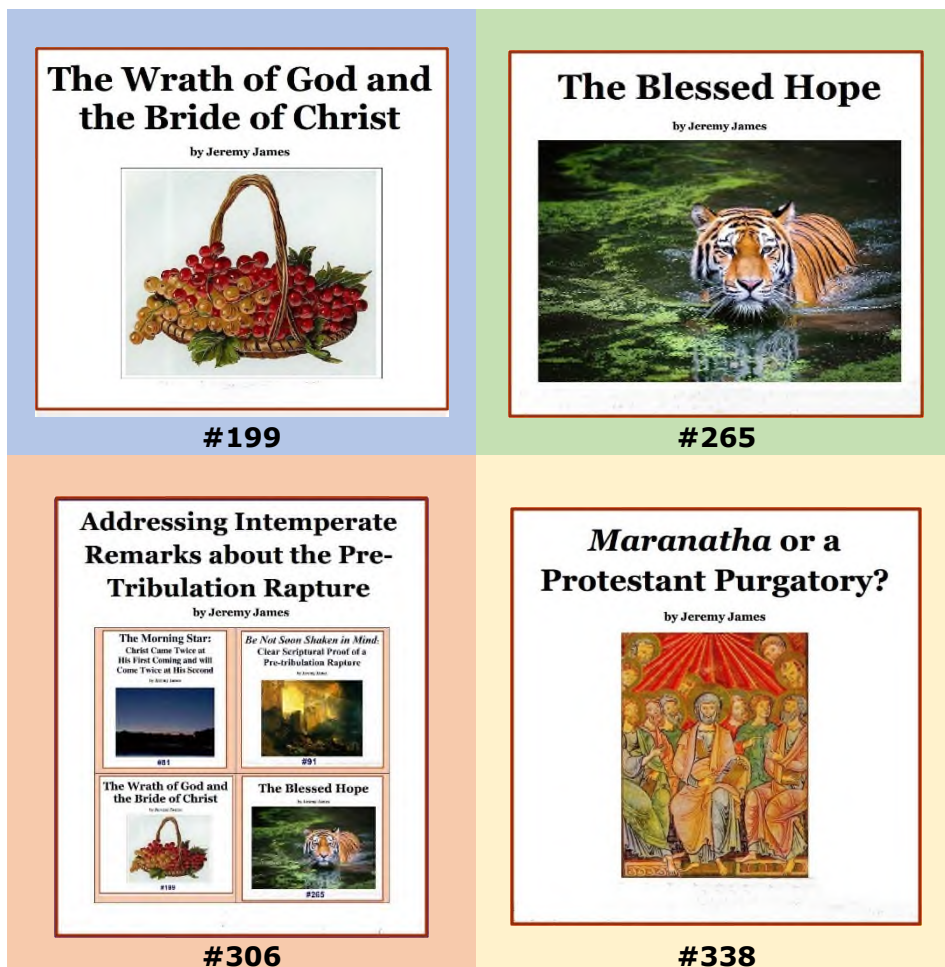
#91

Why the Enemy Hates the Pre-Tribulation Rapture

by Jeremy James



#107



A detailed look at the ‘Rapture Ready??’ video

Since the case he is making is broadly similar to the ‘refutation’ often made by others, we will look at it point by point. It is important that Christians understand the Rapture doctrine from a purely Biblical perspective and not be swayed by arguments thrown up by secular sources. Given that HT has 143,000 subscribers on his YouTube channel, his opinions are bound to influence a lot of people, especially those who may not discern the many defects in his argument. (The quotations by HT below follow the sequence in the video.)

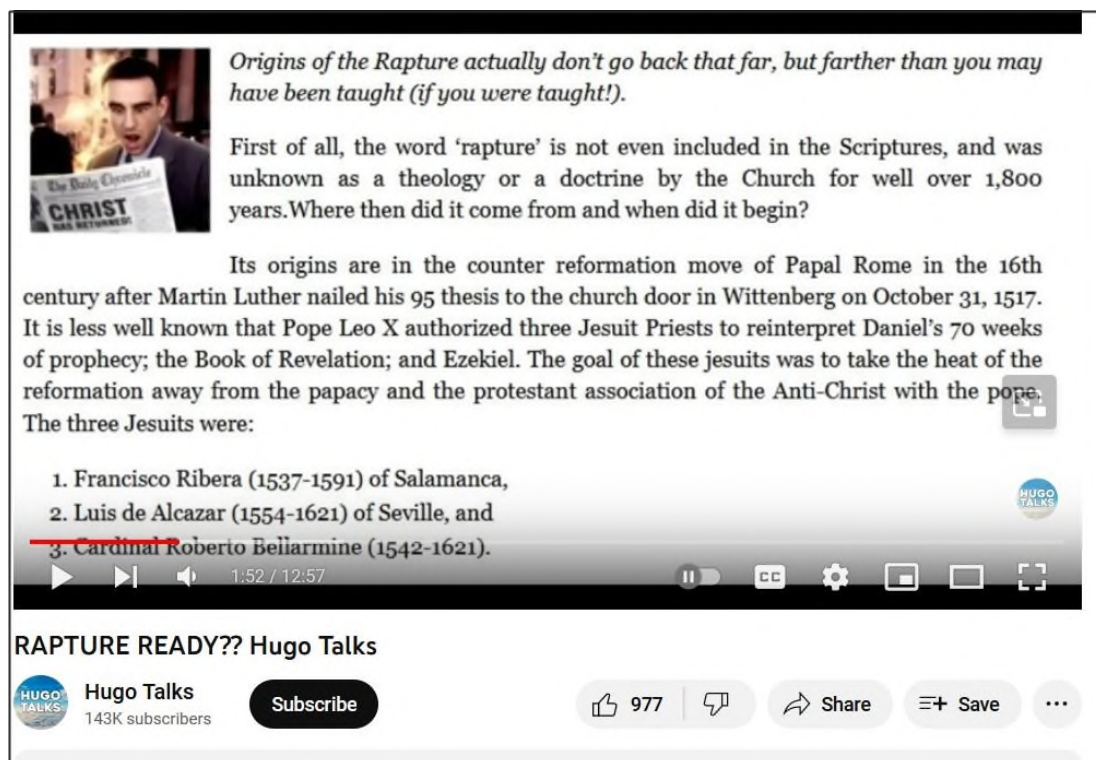
“There is very little scriptural evidence for this [the Rapture]... I’ve nothing against the concept of it but, biblically, it doesn’t stack up.” - HT

He gets straight to the point. In the course of his 13-minute video he fails to mention most of the passages in Scripture which support a PTR, and yet from the outset he dares to assert that “biblically, it doesn’t stack up”. This video is a straightforward hit piece, not an impartial and informed look at an important subject. His follow-up video, posted on 16 July, makes his animosity even more apparent.

[Re Christ returning ‘twice’ at his second coming:]
“It’s a similar strategy to the many apparitions of Mary.” - HT

The PTR doctrine states that Christ will return first for his Bride, whom he will meet in the air, and then, after seven years or so, he will come physically to the earth to judge mankind. HT flippantly dismisses this as an “apparition” theory. His attempt to disparage the PTR by comparing it with the Marian theology of the Catholic Church is developed further when he mentions the Jesuits.

He then produced a slide (see below) to support his view that the Rapture doctrine was invented by three Jesuits in the 16th century, seemingly to deflect Protestant censure away from Rome and the Papacy. It was then taken up with enthusiasm by Edward Irving, a preacher who had been expelled for heresy by the Church of Scotland in 1832. He follows this with a fleeting reference to prophetic utterances by the charismatic visionary, Margaret MacDonald, which seemingly had an influence on Irving.



The screenshot shows a YouTube video player with a slide overlay. The slide contains the following text:

Origins of the Rapture actually don't go back that far, but farther than you may have been taught (if you were taught!).

First of all, the word ‘rapture’ is not even included in the Scriptures, and was unknown as a theology or a doctrine by the Church for well over 1,800 years. Where then did it come from and when did it begin?

Its origins are in the counter reformation move of Papal Rome in the 16th century after Martin Luther nailed his 95 thesis to the church door in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517. It is less well known that Pope Leo X authorized three Jesuit Priests to reinterpret Daniel's 70 weeks of prophecy; the Book of Revelation; and Ezekiel. The goal of these jesuits was to take the heat of the reformation away from the papacy and the protestant association of the Anti-Christ with the pope. The three Jesuits were:

1. Francisco Ribera (1537-1591) of Salamanca,
2. Luis de Alcazar (1554-1621) of Seville, and
3. ~~Cardinal Roberto Bellarmine~~ (1542-1621).

The video player shows the title 'RAPTURE READY?? Hugo Talks', the channel 'Hugo Talks' with 143K subscribers, and engagement metrics: 977 likes, 1 comment, and share/save options.

All of these ‘facts’ were rattled off as though his viewers were already familiar with the supposedly manmade origins of the Rapture doctrine and didn’t require further elucidation. Nowhere in his 13 minute rant does he acknowledge that the validity of a Christian doctrine rests entirely on its scriptural support. His impatient recital of historical trivia contributes nothing to our understanding. Rather it draws the viewer’s attention away from the real issues – which may have been his intention.

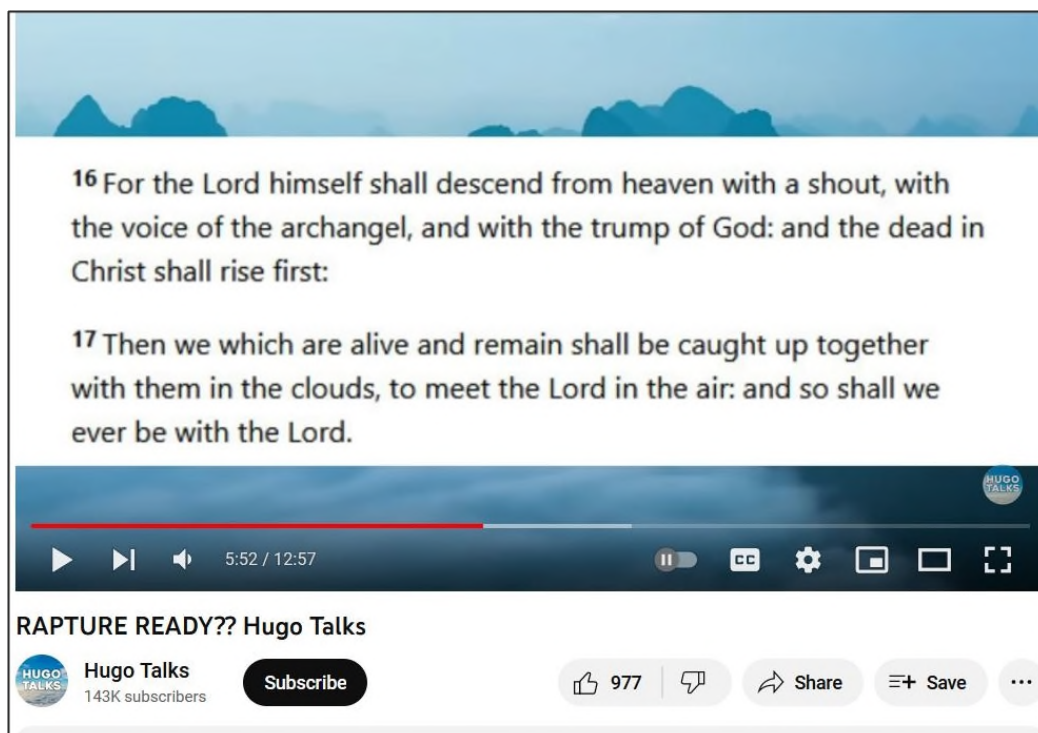
With no little irony, he then says the Christian websites on YouTube that promote the PTR are “all cross-promoting one another” – “they all seem to be linked with one another” and never seem to get shadow-banned. In saying this he is suggesting (a) that these websites are trying to deceive true Christians and (b) that YouTube would only shadow-ban a true Christian website. (This may explain why *Hugo Talks* continues to enjoy a high profile on YouTube.)

[Regarding Christians who preach a PTR]

“In my opinion they are either deceived, or they are deliberately deceiving you... Neither Jesus nor the Apostles taught that such an event [would occur] before the seven-year Tribulation...

It really has very little scriptural support.” - HT

This is a brazen assertion. Without even bothering to examine the many passages in Scripture which are normally cited in support of a PTR, he argues that all who believe in a PTR are deceived and – he would seem to imply – that if they continue to talk about it, despite all the evidence against it, they are engaged in a deliberate deception. No doubt there are many professed Christians who, impressed by this line of reasoning, would feel the PTR doctrine should be labelled a heresy and addressed accordingly. His provocative attitude takes on a darker tone in his follow-up video.



[He cites 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 – see slide above]

“Now this may sound like a Rapture, but it’s being resurrected. Right. This is a reference to the doctrine of the bodily resurrection of the saints, the Resurrection on the last day, on Judgment Day. That’s what it seems to me. And this is from the Apostle Paul. And if you read it in context, Paul is addressing the topic of the resurrection of the believers who have died before Christ’s return and those, as it states, which are alive and remain. It has nothing to say about the removal of the Church prior to or during the Tribulation.” - HT

This is scripture-twisting in grand style. Verse 16 tells us that the “dead in Christ” will rise first. Verse 17 says that those believers who are alive when this resurrection occurs will ALSO “be caught up together with them in the clouds.” Could it be any plainer?

He tries to weasel out of this by saying:

“Those who are alive or “remain” are those who will receive their glorified bodies automatically when Jesus comes down from heaven. It’s nothing about a Rapture seven years before Jesus returns, y’know. I could go on.” - HT



The Word.



Everything else.

Yes, he could go on. But he would only be digging a deeper hole for himself. This last comment is sheer nonsense. Verses 16 and 17 are obviously not saying what he claims. HT is making a big deal out of the word “remain”, as though the saints who are alive at the resurrection of the dead will “remain” on earth until Christ returns at the end of the Tribulation. But it obviously cannot mean anything of the kind since verse 17 clearly states that the saints who are alive will be caught up together with those who were resurrected from the dead. There is no extended time interval. It is one, same hour, trumpet-call event. This is WHY it is announced by a trumpet call.

We have further proof of this from **1 Corinthians 15:51-53** -

**“Behold, I shew you a mystery;
We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall
be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
For this corruptible must put on incorruption,
and this mortal must put on immortality.”**



[Regarding Revelation 13:7 - the saints martyred during the Tribulation]

“These saints that are being raptured before the Tribulation, are they a different class of saints. Is that what they’re saying? I mean, what’s going on here?” - HT

It is difficult to tell whether HT has actually studied any of the commentaries on the Book of Revelation. If he had he would surely have seen that the saints who are called out in the PTR are a special creation, known collectively as the Bride of Christ. The saints who are martyred for their faith during the Tribulation are also given their resurrection bodies, but only at the end of the Tribulation. The Book of Revelation refers to them as follows:

“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” (Revelation 6:9-11)

Note carefully what is being revealed here. The Tribulation martyrs are indeed a separate group of saints, as indicated by the last verse. Their “brethren” are fellow Tribulation martyrs – and they are all resurrected together at the end of the Tribulation (that is, after a “little season”). In numerical terms the Tribulation martyrs may far outnumber the saints taken out in the PTR, who collectively constitute the Church or, as she is described in **Psalm 45:9**, “**the queen in gold of Ophir**”.



Psalm 45 refers as follows to the close relationship and tender kinship between these two groups of saints:

“The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.” (Psalm 45:13-14)

The king is Christ, the queen is the Church, and the “virgins,” her companions, are the Tribulation martyrs. The queen will always enjoy access to Christ during the Millennium, while the martyrs will be “brought unto” the king at the invitation of the queen.

“So they get to suffer, while the other ones get a free pass?” - HT

This comment is being voiced with greater frequency by various critics. Why should some saints get taken out before the Tribulation starts, while others have to endure persecution and martyrdom? The explanation is remarkably simple. ALL saints are taken out in the Rapture. ALL of them. Not one is left behind. The Tribulation martyrs are those who came to Christ DURING the Tribulation. After the PTR occurred, these individuals were lost souls, just like everyone else – unregenerate, under judicial condemnation, and “**dead in trespasses and sins**” (**Ephesians 2:1**). Through the incredible mercy and longsuffering of God, they came to faith during the Tribulation and willingly accepted martyrdom rather than give their allegiance to the Antichrist.

The great evangelistic outreach during the Tribulation, conducted mainly by 144,000 sealed Jewish believers and a specially appointed angel (Revelation 14:6), will touch the hearts of many and lead them to repentance. What a glorious harvest of souls!

“The Rapture concept, to me, is a bit iffy, especially when I see it being pushed by certain people. It could be a bit of a psychological operation, a trick to it. One that is aimed specifically at Christians, specifically aimed at believers, those who have faith – maybe in order to screw around with their faith.” - HT

With this remark, HT takes his viewers into a world which may be unfamiliar to many of them, where the PTR – if not the Rapture itself – is dismissed as a “psychological operation,” a trick designed to weaken the faith of true believers. By doing this he is raising the possibility that the PTR doctrine of itself is a dangerous demonic deception and that those who support it are not only deceived but are unwittingly causing harm to their brothers and sisters in Christ.



[Credit: Greg Anderson]

He sows these seeds of doubt with a confident swagger in his voice, tripping along as though his offhand remarks were not especially noteworthy. The reality, of course, is very different. HT is taking aim at true believers and releasing a fiery dart of doubt and distrust.

He goes on to say:

“Maybe it’s misleading people, maybe it’s to confuse people. Is it possible that this Rapture concept is to confuse people, confuse them about the End Times so they mix up what’s where in the timeline? Y’know, make a load of Christians believe in it so they are all waiting around for some big vanishing event to happen – and not actually realize that maybe things are actually happening around them and before their eyes. Maybe it makes them complacent, y’know: ‘Oh well, it doesn’t matter, I’m saved! I’m going to be beamed up before anything bad happens’...

“What happens if they’re not beamed up and things start going bad around them? The man of sin is revealed and the mark of the beast comes around – they’re going to wonder, *Hey, what happened to the Rapture? Did somebody lie to me?* Is their faith going to waver? Will they be open to being deceived some more?” - HT

He wants us to believe that he has examined this subject in depth and concluded that these unfortunate people are greatly deceived and need his help.

Readers who have listened carefully to his two Rapture videos may have noticed that his seemingly spontaneous, *ad hoc* remarks are actually read by him from a script. The script itself may have been researched and written by a team assigned to this task. This would explain why his second video, which was cunningly designed to avoid answering difficult questions about his position, was produced only a few days after the first.



His closing remarks

His closing remarks (below) amount to a general warning to all Christians to avoid this speculative subject, to stop talking about it and pretending they know when they couldn’t possibly know:

“I would be very wary of people who blindly believe in it and tell you it’s going to happen definitely, because they don’t know. And you have to wonder why would they push such a concept so heavily? Why not just say, *Well, we don’t know for sure; I don’t really know.* Instead they are constantly telling their audience that it’s going to happen, it’s going to happen anytime soon. It seems a dubious way of carrying on. They are, what d’you call it, tickling the ears of the public, telling them what they want to hear – in my opinion anyway...

“So, personally, given that it has very little Biblical reason for it, I wouldn’t be expecting it... don’t expect that to happen any time soon. Any resurrection in the Bible, getting caught up in the clouds etc I would imagine would be when you’re saved. Just don’t be expecting it seven years before. Hey, if it happens, all well and good. And anyway it’s out of your control anyway. I wouldn’t be expecting it because someone told you this.” - HT

This is nothing but confusion. The man is a trickster.

Christians who stand by the PTR doctrine do so for only one reason – they can see it for themselves in Scripture. What is more, they can see that it is given to us as a “blessed hope,” a glorious comfort to believers, especially as the End Time approaches.

The Enemy does not want believers to have this comfort. He wants to quash this hope and brand as apostates those who hold to it or preach the PTR doctrine. The less attention it receives, both before it occurs and after, the easier it will be for him to accomplish his wicked work.



Comments from his audience

It is clear from the comments posted by viewers on YouTube in response to the first video that a number of believers were not taken in by his mullarkey. Their understanding of this doctrine is grounded in Scripture. As several of them noted, *We are not appointed to wrath* (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

One person named Diana said:

“It took me a lot of Bible study to see that the Rapture is in there. You really have to study the WHOLE Bible. After years of study and reading and re-reading the Bible, I am convinced that the Rapture is real. I do not know the day or the hour. I was like you when I started learning. You are very smart – I could give you a bunch of scripture to back up what I am saying, [but] my energy is gone... you can easily research [this] online or study [it] for yourself. I never believe anyone except the Holy Spirit and what He leads me in the Bible.”

For those who may not have the time or energy to examine this subject in depth, we include in **Appendix A** a list of the passages in Scripture which believers often cite in support of this doctrine. The Appendix is not intended to “prove” the doctrine but to enable readers to see why so many born-again Christians have been led by the Holy Spirit to an understanding and acceptance of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture.

A viewer named Sophie posted the following comment:

“Jesus took the wrath of God upon Himself on the cross which means those who are ‘made righteous in Christ through faith’ (the saved Christian who is a new creation) cannot have God’s wrath poured upon them a second time because The Father sees them as Jesus now. They are made acceptable in Jesus. The cross was once and for all. God’s wrath was poured out and ‘finished.’ So therefore the true church (Bride) cannot be present at the time of Tribulation. It is theologically impossible.”

It was a real pleasure to read such a clear, well-expressed Biblical observation. Another viewer seemed to agree when she replied:

“Amen! Plus I believe it HAS to happen in order for Israel to be saved! That will be the big thing that slaps them in the face. Thankfully! I want to see them on fire for Jesus!!”

This woman was making a great point in her reply. As the Bible states – see Romans 11:11 – the nation of Israel will be provoked to great jealousy by the Church. This has never happened in the course of history, but it certainly will when the Church is taken out in the Rapture! In a state of shock and despondency, the righteous children of Israel will say, *That should have been us!*

CONCLUSION

As we noted earlier, HT made a follow-up video on the Rapture which he posted on YouTube on 16 July:



In this video he claimed to be responding to the very large number of comments on his first video. He seemed surprised that there were still some people who didn't agree with him! He then launched into a scripted tirade against the PTR which carefully avoided any discussion of the passages in the Bible which support this doctrine.

His two biggest arguments were: (A) that if such a doctrine exists, a doctrine of great importance, it would have been spelled out more clearly in Scripture and, (B) that the teaching known as 'Dispensationalism', on which the PTR depends, is manmade and misleading. Freemasons and false teachers have used these arguments in the past.

We have already published a paper on (B), where we show why 'dispensationalism' (as it is sometimes called) is Biblically sound [#354].

As for (A), well, what can we say? Is it our place to tell the Holy Spirit how He should have done His job? The doctrine of a PTR is clearly expressed in Scripture and easily apprehended by those believers who take the time to examine it carefully. The same may be said of the Virgin Birth, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and the doctrine of the Substitutionary Atonement.

When we fail to tremble at His Word, we risk drifting further and further down the path of personal opinion.

Where God's Word is concerned, our opinions are irrelevant.

While hundreds of Christians posted comments on YouTube in response to the first video, only a few stood firmly on the Word. They saw through the false arguments and opinions expressed on the video and they did not hesitate to say that HT was wrong, mistaken or misguided. Perhaps the rest felt it wasn't their place to make such comments, but if those who know and understand say nothing, who will?

Where the blessed hope is concerned, it is our privilege to share it and celebrate it with our fellow believers! It is truly a comfort in this wicked world:

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Romans 10:13-15)

To those of you with beautiful feet, I say *Keep sharing the good news!*

**Jeremy James
Ireland
July 17, 2023**

APPENDIX A

Clear Scriptural Evidence of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture

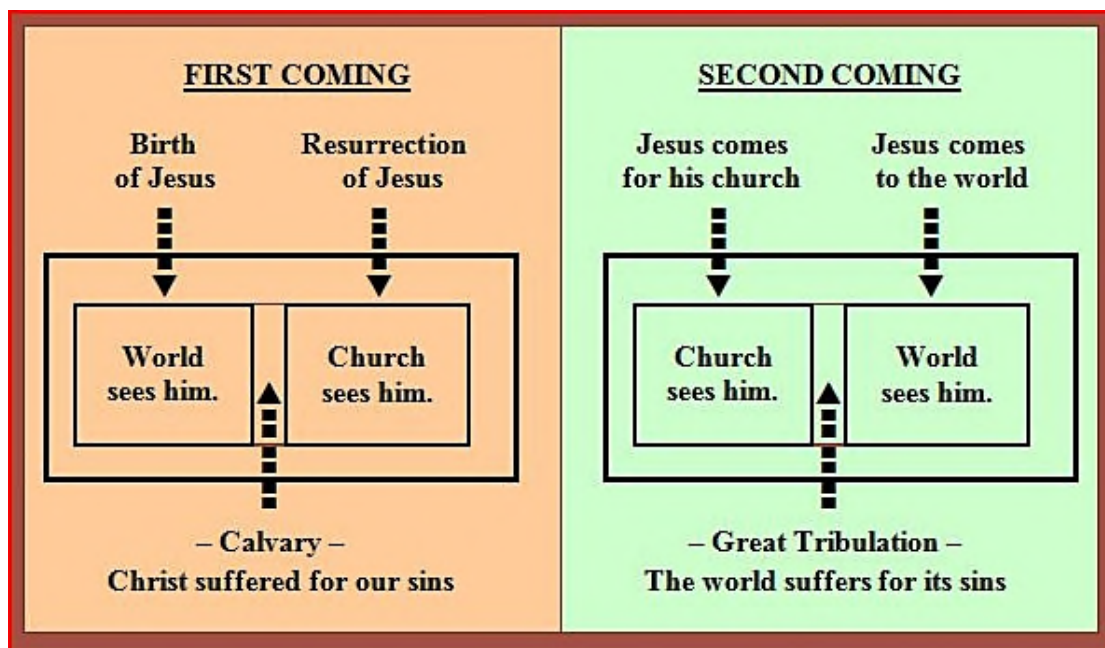
We set out below the principal points in an earlier paper – *Be Not Soon Shaken in Mind: Clear Scriptural Proof of a Pre-tribulation Rapture* (#91). They clearly show that the Bible teaches the PTR doctrine. For a more detailed treatment of the evidence, please see our other papers on this subject: #20, #81, #107, #199, #265, #306, and #338.

1. The price has already been paid

The bride of Christ will not go through the Great Tribulation since Christ has already taken the wrath of God upon himself on her behalf. That was what our Lord achieved for us on Calvary! **"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus..." (Romans 8:1)** How then can the church be required to pay a debt that the Son of God has already paid? It is impossible.

2. Christ will come twice at his second coming

At his first coming Christ was seen first by the world and then by the church. At his second coming, he will be seen first by the church and then by the world. In the first part of his second coming, when he comes as the morning star, he will call the church from the earth. The Apostle Peter was referring to the first part of the Second Coming when he spoke of the "day star" (Christ) dawning in the hearts of all true believers – **"...until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (2 Peter 1:19)**



3. The Day of Christ will come before the Day of the LORD

The *day of the Christ* is not the day of the LORD (implying wrath) but rather the day of the Resurrection/Rapture (implying salvation) that precedes the day of the LORD: **"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6)**

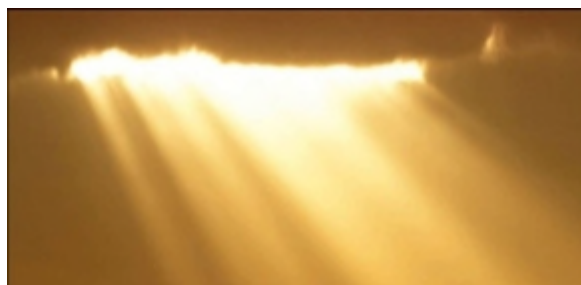
The day of Christ is the day for which the church is patiently waiting: **"That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." (2 Thessalonians 2:2)**

Paul rebuked the church at Corinth for tolerating fornicators in their midst and asked that they expel a certain individual – both for his own good, as well as that of the church: **"To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."** (1 Corinthians 5:5) It was possible that the wayward individual would come to his senses and repent of his sin **"that the spirit [of the individual] may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."** Thus Paul is not speaking here of judgment in that day, but the very opposite. The day of the Lord Jesus is the day of redemption, when the church is taken from the earth by the Holy Spirit.

4. The Blessed Hope

The words "Anathema Maranatha" mean 'let him be accursed, the Lord is coming.' The wrath to come is for those who are *Anathema*, set apart for destruction, while those who are saved live daily in the prayer of rejoicing, *Maranatha* – 'the Lord is coming': **"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha."** (1 Corinthians 16:22)

The technical meaning of 'Anathema' is *set apart by God for destruction*, being the natural condition of all who reject the gift of salvation. Thus Paul is not asking that they be accursed – since they already are – but that their awful condition be acknowledged. At the same time he reminds them of their own blessed state, that as heirs to salvation they should be ever mindful that the Lord Jesus is coming.



Paul reminded Titus that all true believers are **"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13)** In his first letter to the Thessalonians he directly connects the "glorious appearing" of Christ with the deliverance of the church from the day of the LORD's wrath: **"And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."** (1 Thessalonians 1:10).

This shows conclusively that, living in "**the blessed hope**", the church is waiting and praying for "**the day of Christ**" and not "**the day of the LORD**" which comes after it.

If the Day of the LORD preceded the Day of Christ, then every time a believer prayed for the return of Christ, for example through the Maranatha prayer, he or she would be praying also for God's wrath to fall upon the earth. The prophet Amos forbade any believer to do this: "**Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light.**" (Amos 5:18)

The following verse confirms that the church, the bride of Christ, will not face the wrath of the Great Tribulation: "**For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night...For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.**" (1 Thessalonians 5:1 and 9)

This comfort, this blessed hope, is grounded in the return of Christ for his Bride. The word "wrath" always refers to the working out of God's anger on earth. Thus the "salvation" to which the above verse refers is deliverance from the wrath to come, from the seven years of the Great Tribulation.

5. The church is already glorious in God's eyes

The Tribulation is the ultimate expression of God's wrath:

"The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land [i.e the earth]."
(Zephaniah 1:14-18)

The wrath of God, which will fall upon the entire earth, is known as **the great day of the LORD**. It is being held patiently in reserve by Him until the End Time. The apostle Paul makes it abundantly clear that the wrath of the LORD will be directed only at those who hold the truth in unrighteousness: "**For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness**" (Romans 1:18) Furthermore, it will come "**upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.**" (Revelation 3:10) Since the church does not hold the truth in unrighteousness she cannot possibly be on earth during the time of His wrath, when "**the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy.**"

The LORD sees the church exactly as His Son sees her, "**... a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing...**" (Ephesians 5:27).

Given that the church is already the body of Christ, the view that she might nonetheless be subject to the wrath of God, if only in part, is in direct conflict with the completeness and perfection of the Substitutionary Atonement.

As the apostle Paul says, **"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus..." (Romans 8:1)** In what sense, then, does the church need to 'go through' the Great Tribulation in order to be 'purified' in the eyes of God? In no sense whatever! The very idea conflicts utterly with all that the Bible teaches about the church and about our loving Father, **"whose mercy endureth forever"**.

6. Departure of the Holy Spirit

Very shortly before He destroyed the earth in the Flood, the LORD said, **"My spirit shall not always strive with man..." (Genesis 6:3)**. The LORD made a similar declaration in relation to the Great Tribulation when He said He would remove **"He who now restrains" (2 Thessalonians 2)**. The striking parallel between these two great Judgments would strongly suggest that **"My spirit"** and **"He who now restrains"** are the same. Since the Holy Spirit dwells in the church and will never leave her, He must carry her with Him when He is **"taken out of the way" (2 Thessalonians 2)**. [See also paper #338 for a more detailed discussion of this aspect.]

7. The Philadelphian Church

Since the church, the body of Christ, cannot be divided into segments, the promise to the church at Philadelphia in Revelation 3:10 must apply to the Bride as a whole, namely the sum of all living church-age believers: **"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."** (Revelation 3:10)

katoikeo - to dwell permanently

The Greek word for "dwell" in the phrase **"dwell upon the earth"** has an important connotation not found in its English counterpart. The more usual Greek word is *oikeyo*, which means simply "to dwell", while the word used by John is *katoikeo*, which means "to dwell permanently". It is used, for example, to describe the fullness of the Godhead that dwells in Christ (Colossians 2:9). Therefore **"them that dwell upon the earth"** are those who see the earth as their true home. As such they are citizens of the earth by choice, in contrast to church-age believers whose **"citizenship is in heaven"** (Philippians 3:20) [NKJV].

8. Thief in the Night

The second part of the second coming of Christ (when he defeats the Antichrist) is preceded by very specific signs. However the Rapture of the church-age saints can come at any time, with no advance warning: **"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night."** (1 Thessalonians 5:2) Obviously, if this is the case, the Rapture must occur before the startling events that will signal the beginning of the seven-year Tribulation.

As Scripture tells us, the resurrection of church-age believers will take place on the same day as the Rapture. Paul told Timothy that two false teachers, Hymenaeus and Philetus, were teaching that **"the resurrection is past already" (2 Timothy 2)**. If that was true, then the Rapture would also have taken place. The fact that some believers were taken in by this deception is proof that the early Christians knew that the resurrection – just like the Rapture – could occur at any time, with no prophetic signs to mark its approach. Since the resurrection is an imminent event, then so too is the Rapture, and both must occur before the seven-year Tribulation.

9. The 70 Weeks of Daniel

The great seven-year Tribulation is concerned with both the judgment of rebellious Israel (from which a remnant will be preserved) and the judgment of rebellious Gentile nations (from which a remnant will be preserved). The church has no role or place in either of these tumultuous programs.



The 70 weeks of Daniel all pertain to Israel – see our paper #353. The first 69 have elapsed, but the 70th – being the 7 years of the Tribulation – has yet to commence. The 69th ended just before the church was founded on Pentecost. At that point Israel's prophetic clock was put on hold and will not restart until the church is complete and removed from the earth. Israel was the LORD's chosen witness on earth up to the end of the 69th week, whereupon the church took over this unique role. Israel cannot resume that role and become God's chosen witness again on the earth, as promised in Scripture, until the church is removed.

10. Those who endure to the end

The Holy Spirit will depart from the earth with the church in a Pre-tribulation Rapture. When He has left the earth (in the special sense that He was present on earth during the church age), He will no longer 'seal' new believers as He did during the church age. Therefore, in order to be saved during the great tribulation converts must remain faithful, unto death if necessary: **"But he who endures to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13).**

The book of Revelation gives further confirmation of this: **"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." (Revelation 12:11).**

As Jesus warned, anyone who tries to save his life – by taking the Mark of the Beast – will lose it. Once the mark is taken, that soul is lost forever.

It should be noted that the 144,000 Jewish evangelists are sealed by angels, not by the Holy Spirit (see Revelation 7:2-3).

11. The Rapture as a Sign to the Jews

The Word of God tells us that " **the Jews require a sign...**" (1 Corinthians 1:22). What sign therefore will the 144,000 receive? These men must go through an extraordinary spiritual transformation to convert from Judaism to Christ, all at virtually the same time, and become ardent missionaries and witnesses across the entire earth. It has been suggested that the Rapture of the church is such a sign. The sudden and inexplicable disappearance of millions of born-again Christians, as well as thousands of Jews who had converted to Christianity, will trigger this momentous event. This almost certainly has to occur very close and prior to the commencement of the Great Tribulation if the 144,000 are to have enough time to evangelize the entire world and lead many to Christ.

Just as Elisha picked up the mantle of Elijah (2 Kings 2) and continued on from where his mentor left off, so the saved remnant of Israel, beginning with the 144,000, will pick up the mantle of the Church and continue the work of the LORD.



12. Avenging blood

In Revelation 6:10 the saints who were slain during the Great Tribulation cry with a loud voice to God to avenge their blood. Church-age saints would not have made an imprecatory prayer of this kind since they would have known and been obedient to the great commandment that Jesus gave the church, namely to love her enemies and not call down punishment upon them. This shows that the saints who died for their faith during the Great Tribulation were not part of the church. Since this is the case, the church must have been completed and removed from the earth before the Great Tribulation began.

13. The Twenty-four Elders

The twenty-four elders in the Book of Revelation are of special significance. Before the events of the Tribulation commence, they are seated on twenty-four thrones and wearing crowns on their heads. The KJV translates *thronos* as "seat" but it is actually a place of distinction, a throne in the real sense.

The crown is given by the Lord as a reward to the saints but **only** on the day of the Bema: "**Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.**" (2 Timothy 4:8) The expression "*at that day*" refers to the day of Christ, when the Lord comes for his bride, the church.

The twenty-four elders are the representatives of both the Raptured church and all who died in Christ and were resurrected on the day of Christ. Since they are wearing crowns, they must already have gone through the Rapture/Resurrection and been judged by the Lord at the Bema.

14. The Two Witnesses

The two witnesses in Revelation 11:3 are clothed in sackcloth, a coarse fabric woven from goat hair, which is found only in the Old Testament and never in the New, and are able to call down flaming judgment upon the enemies of Israel. This judicial power is given only to Old Testament saints and never to church-age believers – Christ specifically forbade James and John to think in those terms (Luke 9:54-55).

From this we can see that the two witnesses mark a resumption of Old Testament judgment, which plays no part in the prayers, thoughts or actions of church-age believers. This would suggest that the church had already left the earth before the two witnesses arrive in Jerusalem to commence their remarkable mission.

15. Noah and his family

The eight righteous people living on earth just prior to the Flood were preserved in the Ark. As a foreshadowing of the Rapture, they too were 'lifted above' the catastrophic judgment that would shortly come upon the face of the entire earth.

It was through the atonement of Christ (which lay in the future) that the family of the righteous (Noah's family) was preserved from the fury of God's wrath, and it is by the same wonderful atonement that the bride of Christ will be 'lifted above' the earth before the Great Tribulation commences.



Furthermore, in the same way that tens of millions of souls will come to repentance during the Great Tribulation, a great many souls may also have repented during the Flood, between the hour the Ark was sealed – a token of the Rapture ("**and the LORD shut him in.**" (Genesis 7:16)) – and the time, possibly a week or so later, when everyone eventually perished.

16. Lot and his family

The small number of righteous people living in the region of Sodom and Gomorrah (namely Lot and his family) were also removed from the scene of judgment by the mercy of God immediately before His wrath came flaming down with great fury on the cities of the plain.

The New Testament refers several times to the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, clearly to emphasize both the severity and the certainty of the LORD's righteous judgment. We are not saved because of our merits – in God's eyes we have none. We are saved only through our faith in Christ. So we don't 'deserve' to escape the Tribulation. However, if the LORD in His mercy has decided to remove the church from the earth before the seven-year Tribulation begins, then we should humbly rejoice, not only that He will do so, but that, by informing us in advance, He is offering us the comfort of this "blessed hope."



17. Rahab and her family

The term "accursed... to the LORD" means given over to the LORD for complete destruction: **"And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent." (Joshua 6:17)** The inhabitants of the city had been scheduled for destruction long before the Israelites crossed the Jordan. Rahab knew this and decided to shelter the two spies. This singular expression of faith was her salvation. It even saved her family – **"all that are with her in the house"**.

Notice how Noah's 'house' was saved, along with Lot's 'house' and Rahab's 'house'. The church too is a house and a family, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and she too will be saved or removed completely from the coming destruction known as the seven-year Tribulation.



18. The Time of Jacob's Trouble

The seven years of the Great Tribulation is **"the time of Jacob's trouble"** (Jeremiah 30:7), when the righteous children of Israel are finally delivered from bondage after a period of intense trial and affliction (just as they were delivered from Egypt). We know for certain that Jeremiah is referring to the seven-year Tribulation because he says **"for that day is great, so that none is like it"**.

Chapter 30 of Jeremiah shows that Israel herself is the focus of the End Time Tribulation. The Bible gives many other prophecies that link "the isles of the sea" – namely the unregenerate Gentile nations – with the tumultuous events leading to Armageddon, as well as prophecies ("burdens") that foretell the fate of specific Gentile nations, including Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Libya. Nevertheless, despite the significant proportion of Scripture dealing with the End Time Tribulation, there is not a single explicit reference to the presence on earth of the church during all this time.

Since the church has already been reconciled to God, she cannot be subject to His wrath in **"the day of the LORD's vengeance"** (Isaiah 34:8) and cannot be on earth when that day arrives.

19. Fervent prayer

We know from 2 Thessalonians 2 that the **"restrainer"** will be taken out of the way in order that Satan and all who are in rebellion against God may exult for a short time in their wickedness. If the church was still on earth during the Tribulation, she would alert the world to the identity of the Antichrist and his real intentions. The saints would also pray fervently against the works of the Antichrist and thereby hinder him greatly in his deadly program of deception and destruction: **"Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."** (Matthew 18:19). From this fact alone it ought to be apparent, even to the sceptics, that the church cannot be on earth when the seven-year Tribulation begins.

20. The Millennial Gentiles

We know from Matthew chapter 25 that there will be a significant cohort of believing natural Gentiles alive on earth at the end of the Tribulation: **"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats"** (Matthew 25:31-32). The Rapture could not occur at the end of the seven-year Tribulation because, if it did, then all believing Gentiles alive at that moment would be taken up into the air and given immortalized bodies. This would leave NO believing natural Gentiles on earth to repopulate the nations (The *Sheep and Goats* judgment will ensure that no unbelieving natural Gentiles will enter the Millennial Kingdom).



Sheep and Goats Judgment by Guido di Pietro

The believing natural Gentiles who survive to repopulate the nations are those who came to faith during the Great Tribulation and were not martyred by the Antichrist regime (and did not take the Mark of the Beast). However, even though they are saved, they are not part of the church. The church must have been removed from the earth before the seven-year Tribulation began, as otherwise there would be two categories of Gentiles who came to faith during the Tribulation, namely (1) the natural (non-immortalized) Gentile believers who repopulate the earth and (2) the immortalized Gentile believers who came to faith after the wrath of God fell upon the whole earth but were then taken up in the Rapture. This would divide the church into two parts, the part that faced all of God's wrath and the part that did not. It would be incomprehensible and completely contrary to all that Scripture says about the church that part should endure all of God's righteous anger and part should not. This can only mean that the Rapture will take place before the seven-years of the Tribulation commence.

21. The Marriage of the Lamb

The Book of Revelation (19:7-8) clearly states that the marriage of Christ to His bride takes place in heaven before Christ returns to earth at the Second Coming to defeat the Antichrist. However, while the marriage ceremony takes place in heaven, the marriage feast (or supper) will take place on earth at the start of the Millennium (Revelation 19:9). This shows that the Rapture and the Second Coming (when Christ descends to earth on the Mount of Olives – Zechariah 14:4) must constitute two completely separate events.

We know also that the Bible draws a clear parallel between this and the Jewish tradition of engagement, betrothal and marriage, which is a three-phase process. Christ became engaged to the church (in the foreknowledge of the Father) before the foundation of the world; he became formally betrothed to the church at the Last Supper; and he will be married to the church on the Day of Christ.

It should be obvious to all true believers that God's wrath cannot fall on the earth before his Son's bride is removed.

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